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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000870

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CVIS](#) [IR](#) [TK](#)

SUBJECT: Iranian Visa Applicants Talk about the Crisis.

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SUMMARY  
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1.(SBU) Ankara's Iranian visa applicants confirm news reports of continuing anti-regime demonstrations and violence throughout the country. Virtually one hundred percent of applicants queried believe the result of the presidential election was corrupted. Few will risk projecting what lies ahead for Iran, but all favor major change.

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WIDESPREAD DISSENT  
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12. (SBU) Conoff queried a cross-section of visa applicants on June 22 for their opinions and observations about the recent events in Iran. All applicants reported being extremely unsatisfied with the results of the June 12 election. One applicant stated it was not an election, it "was a coup d'tat." Another applicant, after receiving his visa remained in the waiting room until all other had left. He then approached conoff and implored the embassy to have our President back the people of Iran in their quest for democracy.

(3) (SBU) Applicants have confirmed that these demonstrations are widespread, the largest naturally being in Tehran, but others have also seen or heard from family about demonstrations in Rasht, Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan, and even the very conservative city of Mashaad. In the latter city, the applicant stated the demonstrators were students and the protests were confined to the University area. There does not appear to be any attempt by the GOI to prohibit free travel as none of our applicants reported any extra security at Tehran airport.

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EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS  
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(4)(U) A University of Tehran student headed to the University of Michigan was a participant in Saturday's demonstration that took place between Azadi Square and Revolution Square. This man said he has been a participant in the past in different student demonstrations, but in past years there had been no blood shedding. On Saturday he reported seeing as many as 100 individuals who had been injured by the thousands of security personnel he identified as Revolutionary Guards. He witnessed the Revolutionary Guards destroy one of the university's dormitories and estimated there were 5000-6000 guards in the area. He saw students hurling rocks at the guards who responded by beating them with batons. He did not see any guards shoot anyone, but said he saw a number of people who had injuries that he believed were gunshot wounds.

(5) (SBU) He told conoff that his initial fear abated as the righteousness of the cause took hold. He also said he has no fear in going back and plans to continue to demonstrate against the

government until his visa to America is ready. He described the demonstrations as not being led by any one person, but the entire community standing up to Khameni. He said the media coverage was very slanted and GOI was broadcasting that the crisis was a result of foreign influence, specifically the United States and Britain. He ended the conversation by saying that he believed that June 12 was the "last election in Iran" and that both he and his father, who participated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution, thought a major change was imminent.

(6) (U) Another student visa applicant from the University of Tehran heading to Columbia University gave a passionate account of the atmospherics in the city of Tehran. He said that he was ashamed of his nation after the GOI told its citizens that Mahmoud Amadinejad had received between 63-69% of the vote in all regions of the country. This led him to participate in the demonstration on Monday, June 15, from Iman Hussein Square to Azadi square. He too stated that the demonstration does not have any leaders, it is the people who want their vote back who are collectively in charge. He spoke emotionally about Neda, the psychology student who was killed on Saturday and whose death was widely broadcast after being captured on a cell phone. He stated that anyone who could kill an innocent girl was an animal. He said there were many brave people demonstrating, even his parents and siblings who he described as being generally apolitical. He also confirmed that there were large numbers of women in these groups and that he considered them very brave.

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COMMENT  
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(7) (U) Iran's visa applicants are usually reticent to speak openly with USG officials about internal Iranian issues. But on the subject of the current crisis in Iran, there is genuine anger and little restraint in telling us their story.

Jeffrey